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ABSTRACT

Observations and recollections of Mexican workers, smuggled illegally to farms in southern Colorado, resulted in this account of their attitudes toward work conditions, pay and benefits, leisure activities, feelings of insecurity, and their aspirations. Backgrounds of the 30 aliens interviewed coincided with available statistics on illegal Mexican workers. They were young (77% under age 30), predominantly male, from north central and northwestern Mexico, quickly deported (49% in less than 1 month, 96% in less than 1 year), poorly educated, and from farmworker backgrounds. Survey data indicated that pay rates were low, with long hours and few benefits; few complaints arose concerning unfair treatment; most housing was substandard and in the form of trailers; leisure activities promoted loneliness and danger of arrest and deportation; views of local Chicanos were ambiguous; future employment opportunities were greater in the United States than in Mexico. Constraints which should be considered when assessing the survey's authenticity are the subjects' illegal status; the jail atmosphere in which 24 of the interviews were conducted; and the possible cultural and language barriers between the subjects and interviewers. These expressed viewpoints may assist in facilitating a more effective program for dealing with Mexican laborers in the United States. (NEC)

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ILLEGAL MEXICAN ALIENS IN SOUTHERN COLORADO: A SAMPLING OF THEIR VIEWS ON LIVING AND WORKING IN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

by

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Observations and recollections by illegal Mexican workers of their life and work in the United States and Mexico are the focus of this paper. From information gained primarily by interviews with certain of these laborers employed in rural, agricultural southern Colorado, an account of their attitudes toward work conditions, pay and benefits, leisure activities, feelings of insecurity, and their aspirations follows.

Colorado's San Luis Valley, from which this study's information is gathered, covers over 8,000 square miles, approximately the size of Connecticut, and is characterized by flat irrigated farm lands (potatoes, barley, lettuce, spinach, hay), cattle and sheep ranches, and desert wastelands (rainfall average, 6 inches yearly). Usually snow-covered, mountain ranges of 12,000-14,000 feet elevation form east, north, and westward bounds to the Valley; southward the region extends unhampered into New Mexico and the Southwest. The San Luis Valley reveals strong historic and cultural ties with both the southwestern United States and with Mexico. Settled by farmers and cattlemen from New Mexico during the 1850's, half of its 40,000 inhabitants today possess Spanish surnames. Reflections of Mexico are clearly visible in local architecture, topography, and life styles.

The region is unique likewise in the visibility of Mexican workers, who are engaged in agricultural-ranching pursuits and have been smuggled illegally to farms from the northern states of Mexico. In an earlier study,[1] the author estimated that 6,000 illegal workers were imported into the Valley during the height of summer harvest months, a figure representing 10-12 percent of the local population. Taken in part from the earlier study but expanded by more recent data, general tabulations of these Mexicans' backgrounds are contained in Table One.

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[1]See Chapter Four, "Community Impact: Illegal Aliens in Southern Colorado's San Luis Valley," in Kenneth F. Johnson and Nina M. Ogle, Illegal Mexican Aliens in the United States: A Teaching Manual on Impact Dimensions and Alternative Futures, (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1978), pp. 93-128.

TABLE ONE

Illegal Mexican Workers - - General Characteristics

State of Residence in Mexico

Chihuahua	1,016	49%
Durango	264	13
Guanajuato	156	8
Zacatecas	126	6
Michoacan	105	5
Jalisco	91	4
Sonora	80	4
other states	221	11
Totals	2,059	

Age Groupings

Less 14 years	67	3%
15-19 years	437	21
20-25	753	37
26-30	326	16
31-35	181	9
36-40	157	8
41-50	93	5
51+	45	2
Totals	2,059	

Length of Stay in United States Before Being Apprehanded

less one month	1,007	49%
1-2 months	298	14
2-3	269	13
3-6	276	13
6-12	136	7
1 year +	73	4
Totals	2,059	

Statistics recorded since 1974 of apprehended aliens indicate most undocumented Mexican workers came from northcentral and northwestern regions of Mexico. [2]Of 2,059 worker descriptions gathered from United States Immigration and Naturalization Service I-213 forms, 49 percent of aliens had lived in the state of Chihuahua, 13 percent in Durango state, 8 percent in Guanajuato, 6 percent in Zacatecas, 5 percent in Michoscan, and 4 percent each in Jalisco and Sonora. All Mexican states, the Federal District as well as the territories of Baja California del Sur and Quintana Roo contributed illegal workers to the Valley's labor force.

In age comparisons, most Mexican laborers were quite young; 77 percent showed ages of less than 31 years, the largest portion coming from the 20-25 age range. Males predominated over females in numbers, although it was not uncommon to find entire families living locally. About one-half of those deported had resided in southern Colorado less than one month and the great majority indicated residence of six months or less.[3]

Thirty interviews were made with local illegal Mexican workers, and their backgrounds coincided with the general statistical tabulations described above. Of these, twenty-four surveys took place among incarcerated aliens in either the city or the county jails. [4] The remaining six, or 20 percent of the total number,

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[2]Data presented in this section covers illegal Mexican Workers apprehended in the San Luis Valley by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service for the periods 1974 through 1976, for the Spring of 1978, and from June 1978 until May 1979. The author expresses his deep appreciation to INS officers Gordon Messer and Bill Simmons for their support on tabulations of statistics from I-213 forms and in answering his many questions concerning Mexican workers in this country.

[3]Apprehension statistics indicate which aliens are most exposed to arrest by the INS, for new arrivals often must work at the same jobs and live in the same residences as did deported aliens. When Mexican laborers gain employment on more isolated farms and only 10-12 percent of Mexican aliens are deported from the San Luis Valley yearly by the INS, a figure based upon estimates of the total alien work force in the area in relation to the acutal apprehension rate of approximately 650.

[4]The author's sincere thanks to Alamosa County Sheriff Ed Seegrist and Alamosa Police Chief James T. Schweda for their assistance in the interviewing process.

transpired with workers on three outlying farms south of Alamosa, Colorado. Comparisons of jailed with non-jailed interviewees showed no differences of responses to the questions asked.

The authenticity of surveys such as that contained in this paper must be held to rigorous review, for serious pitfalls in research may arise when the subjects of surveys, i.e., Mexican aliens, are themselves illegal, when the majority of interviews came from jail atmospheres, and when there exist possible cultural and language barriers among the participants. Each of these factors merits explanation:

1) Interview subjects who were illegal: The author refrained from questions dealing with United States entry channels from Mexico, smuggling operations, prior work contacts with local employers or patrones, or future plans of returning to this country, although some aliens volunteered information concerning these activities. Most questions posed by the author pertained to personal backgrounds of workers, the type of work they were engaged in and whether they were satisfied with it, pay and benefits, housing and food, leisure time activities, relations with local citizens, and aliens' attitudes concerning the United States and Mexico.

The author approached the interviewees by assuring them that he was not an agent from Immigration, and then identified himself as a local college professor who was interested in improving work conditions for Mexicans in this country by recommending in his study some form of legalized contracting for labor.[5] The recelo, or mistrust, quickly diminished when it became apparent during the sessions that the questions raised were not threatening to these apprehended aliens in a

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[5] An overwhelming majority of those interviewed favored legalization of Mexican labor in the United States, for reasons which are obvious. The author was sincere in stating to them his bias for legally contracted workers where they would receive wage and other protections but would be restricted from competing with local citizen employees for jobs. Essential to methodology is the extent, if any, that bias on the part of the surveyer affected outcomes. In the writer's opinion, additional information gained from Mexicans because of the interviewers' points of view far outweighed possible bias.

legal sense, nor were they participating in a program detrimental to their future employment opportunities.

2) Jail Atmosphere: For both city and county jails, the author was permitted to interview aliens through cell bars without officers[6] in the vicinity. Wearing a pull-over sweater and older slacks (the stereotyped dress of teachers) and usually sitting on the floor, he sought a relaxed, leisurely manner for conducting interviews. Each session lasted approximately thirty minutes, for longer periods were fatiguing and inmates' responses grew less profitable. Not more than two surveys were completed each day, and no more than four each week; the total period for these interviews encompassed five months.

In nearly one-third of jail surveys, individual cells contained more than one prisoner, sometimes numbering as many as seven in each. The author found one or two main spokesmen in these instances, and counted the total interview as one person.[6] Moreover, surveys were limited to single jail compounds rather than using adjacent cells where questions-answers could be heard from one cell to another. This method eliminated the possibility of duplicating responses.

Admittedly, jail atmospheres are not totally conducive to a free exchange of opinion. Yet, jails may in fact be more suitable places for interviewing the Mexicans than elsewhere because of fewer distractions and pressures, and more time to thoroughly penetrate their views on living and working as illegal aliens in the United States. Restrictions of time on the writer's part and the easy availability of incarcerated aliens made the focus of research the city and county jails. Finally, as a control test, comparisons between prisoners and non-jailed workers' responses showed no measurable variations in survey queries.

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[6] Interviewing collections of respondents possibly has advantages. For example, more and deeper responses may transpire and extreme or faulty opinions may be avoided in these group sessions. The author found no further variation in results between single and multiple-member surveys.

3) Cultural-language Barriers: Great care was exerted to provide clearly-worded survey questions which under-educated rural Mexican workers could answer comfortably. Several questions, already tested in the field, came from Kenneth F. Johnson's current study in the St. Louis-southern Illinois area.[7] Survey items were reviewed further by several Mexican-Central American students for work meaning, verb forms, and slang, and the interviewers noted survey areas which, during sessions with the Mexicans, were rough or confusing and would require alteration. Changes in questions were made as the research period progressed.

Three persons participated in the actual interviewing process: a local college student who, with her husband, owned a ranch and hired illegal aliens; a professor of Spanish familiar with Mexican workers and culture and also living in a near-by rural community; and this author, who did the majority of interviewing in the two jails. Our individual results were compared for significant variations; as none occurred, we all felt we were obtaining the types of information pertinent to the study.

Probably the strongest evidence of our ability to overcome possible cultural and language barriers, however, was the cooperation and interest given us by the respondents themselves. At no time were our questions refused answers; nor did those interviewed ever refrain from seriousness or politeness. Workers showed no bitterness in being jailed or possibly being mistreated in this country. The only complaint they raised focused on delays in bus travel back to Mexico, with the unspoken implication that this would in turn slow their speedy return to work in the United States.

In following pages eight categories of illegal Mexican workers' responses concerning life and work in the United States and Mexico are explored, based on

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[7] See his survey sheet for "Estudio de actitudes de trabajadores agricolas migrantes." The author is indebted to the friendship, encouragement, and professional sharing of Kenneth Johnson.

replies from the Mexicans. These categories include: personal backgrounds of respondents, aliens' type of work and satisfaction with employment conditions, pay levels and benefits, food and housing, leisure time activities, community relationships, attitudes in comparing Mexico with the United States, and considerations of their own futures.

Personal Backgrounds of Respondents: Mexicans interviewed approximated the general characteristics of background described in the initial pages of this paper according to age, sex, and state of origin in Mexico. Ages ranged from 17 to 53, with the median at less than 25 years. All were men except two. The state of Chihuahua predominated in sending workers to southern Colorado (other states: Sonora, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Michoacan) and Chihuahuan small towns, Cuauhtémoc, Parral, Delicias, and Namiquipa in particular contributed more illegal aliens than did Ciudad Juárez and the city of Chihuahua.

As one would expect, levels of formal schooling among most workers was low, with four to seven years the usual response. One young man attested to attending a polytechnical college in Zacatecas, however, which was the most prominent exception to this norm. Ninety percent reported their need to support families living in Mexico; several maintained households exclusively in the United States. In every case, parents of the illegal workers were themselves farm laborers or campesinos, living in small Mexican towns or ranches and engaged in various agricultural pursuits. When asked their own occupations in Mexico before arriving in this country, the great majority described farm-cattle-orchard work and the remainder reported construction jobs in Juárez or the city of Chihuahua. Most of those interviewed had parents, brothers-sisters, children, or close relatives also working (or had formerly worked) in the United States, primarily in the border areas of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, or California.

Type of Work and Employment Satisfaction Levels: Mexican workers all complained of lack of employment in Mexico, and listed this factor alone as their reason for seeking work in the United States. For instance, one woman stated the only job she could obtain in Chihuahua for the entire year was picking apples a few weeks during the fall. Others found no work in Mexican cities and certainly not in the overcrowded countryside. Questioned as to their preference in work location if ample employment were available in both countries, a slight majority favored Mexico.

Locating available agricultural positions in this country was considerably easier than in Mexico, according to most interviewees. Few Mexicans interviewed had worked in United States cities because of their agrarian backgrounds and skills, although they believed higher salaries could be had in urban areas. Wages increased as these aliens moved some distance from the Mexican frontier. Generally, benefits of agrarian labor outweighed city employment because jobs were more plentiful on farms than in cities and rural work provided more security from INS deportation.

The great majority of respondents held agricultural jobs, these concentrated most heavily in sorting potatoes in grading warehouses during winter months and planting-harvesting potatoes and lettuce in summer. Other Mexicans interviewed labored in cattle ranches or in general year-around farm work, and one had been employed at several lumber mills in the San Luis Valley.

Very few complaints of maltreatment of dishonesty by patrones emerged in survey responses, the common retort being: "no quepas" (complaints), "estoy muy contento," or "completamente satisfecho." Only one Mexican reported personality difficulties with his boss; two non-jailed aliens desired higher salaries. The author interviewed two citizen wives of workers; each described fair-courteous

treatment by employers toward their husbands and to other illegal workers they know. (In contrast, while praising patrones, the wives harshly criticized other discrimination against Mexican aliens, i.e., abuse from fellow workers, Chicanos, businessmen, or auto repair outlets.) Whereas discriminatory labor practices do occur in the region, the consensus from interviews shows remarkably honest treatment of Mexican labor by employers, albeit, for lower wage and benefit levels. For example, in researching the Johnson study, the author found farmers strongly valuing Mexicans' dependability and hard work, traits they claimed that were not shown in such high proportions by local citizens. Another reason for high work satisfaction among illegal aliens probably stems from the availability of good jobs for them in the locale and their ability to move from adverse to better employment experiences as a result.

Although survey questions did not center on job placement activities and smuggling operations, some laborers provided insights concerning local assistance in gaining farm jobs. A high percentage of Mexicans surveyed had prior assurances of obtaining work before entering the United States, these communications arising from local smuggling-transportation networks (particularly for recruitment to larger mechanized farming enterprises) or from the illegals' contacts themselves with relatives or small town acquaintances in Mexico. (Cuauhtémoc, Parral, and other small Chihuahuan villages or municipios are well-known to southern Colorado farm residences because of such connections.) One non-jailed worker interviewed by the author served as a major alien placement source between local farmers and his fellow villagers from Michoacan.

Several workers revealed that Mexicans were excluded from higher paying positions because of farm union membership rights allowed citizens. This exclusion came particularly from lettuce-cabbage-spinach harvesting and from trucking-mechanized machinery employment.

One final question was asked concerning illegals' employment: were Mexicans taking jobs from American workers? In reply, all aliens stated, with a shrug usually, that perhaps a few of their jobs could be filled by citizens. Ye , there was "sufficient work for everyone," they alleged, and local citizens did not want to work as hard or as long at labor as did Mexicans and were not suited for intensive farm employment.[8]

Pay and Work Benefits: Farm wages by United States standards are quite low; in comparison, however, they are very good rates for Mexicans. One worker calculated his pay of $2.90 per hour at a potato warehouse, if continued for two or three months at 40 hours each week, could support his family of eight persons in rural Chihuahua for a year. Local warehouse employers uniformly paid workers $2.90 per hour, and for more specialized labor, i.e., mechanized equipment operation, a wage of $3.25 was common. Smaller farmers provided lower pay amounts, for example $1.25 per hour or $75 weekly for 60 hours of labor, but frequently they contributed free housing and utilities in these cases. Normally, employment which offered security from INS deportation received more favor among aliens than did less secure but higher paid jobs. This contrast made isolated farms and ranches sought-after by Mexicans, despite their lower wages, than were the more elevated salaries of less secure potato warehouses and lettuce operations.

Mexican laborers reported lengthy work weeks, with as many as eighty hours during summer planting and harvest. Potato warehouse foremen, interviewees claimed, usually demanded 45-50 hours of labor each week; smaller farmers required 60-70 hours. No respondents received over-time pay increments for these extra

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[8] The author is in agreement with this contention, for, as documented by Colorado employment officials, inadequate farm labor occurs, particularly during planting and harvest periods. Citizen workers leave farms for better paying urban employment, and much agrarian work is seasonal. Therefore, Mexican labor continues to be vital in resolving periodic local employment scarcities.

This writer strongly favors official measures for legalizing Mexican contract or bracero labor on a more extensive scale when such employment does not exclude local citizenry from jobs and when Mexicans themselves are assured better work protections in this country than they currently receive. Possibly, rural areas, not cities, would benefit more substantially from this pattern of Mexican labor.

efforts. Few fringe benefits accrued to workers from bosses, for only a small mirority indicated such items given them as free housing, medical protections, or transportation to/from work.[9] Whereas none of those surveyed acquired government assistance in this country, two lived with local women who qualified for food stamps and Aid to Dependent Children benefits. Another two Mexicans had their income augmented by common law wives' employment.

A significant portion of most aliens' pay was regularly sent to families in Mexico. One youth, age 17, carefully estimated that he sent $1,300 to Chihuahua during a period of eight months. Approximately half of respondents returned $100 monthly to Mexico; another quarter, $50. The most common method for delivery of money to Mexico, according to workers surveyed, was in the form of bank cashiers' check drafts, although some reported employers had consented to sending portions of aliens earnings directly to their families.

Housing, Food, Health: Illegal workers' housing frequently was quite inferior to other dwellings in the vicinity. Usually, one can spot these habitations easily from a highway or street, for they are rather dingy shacks or trailors surrounding potato warehouses, or they appear as dilapidated adobe buildings or trailors situated near out-buildings some distance behind farm homes.[10] Mexicans claimed better housing conditions for them in this country than in Mexico, despite the appearance of homes provided workers, although several complained of high rent and utility rates.

Over half of Mexicans surveyed lived in trailors, the remainder residing in either apartments or houses. Frequently, three to five workers shared expenses

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[9] Most workers paid $1.50 each day for transportation to and from work, and this was provided usually by citizen fellow workers.

[10] The author visited several aliens' homes. Although some were representative of average American middle class residences, the vast majority were very sub-standard--single or double room space only, crampled trailers, few water or electrical outlets, primitive heating, very dirty, and ill-furnished. See the Johnson study, pages 96-97 for one description.

in a single dwelling; several others had moved in with local women. Rental rates for trailors, ranging from $120 to $175 monthly as indicated from survey replies, approximated normal trailor rent costs paid by citizens, according to local housing officials.

Food preferences primarily included Mexican dishes - - frijoles, sopa, carne, tamales, enchiladas. Whereas aliens favored Mexican meals over those of this country, a majority had grown to enjoy certain American foods as well. When questioned on health and sickness, only several reported major illnesses, and those indicated they visited a doctor or hospital only as a last resort. Many were bothered occasionally by cold winter climate, with colds, flu, and strep throat problems the most common malady.

Free time-Leisure: A wide variety of leisure time activities were described by Mexican workers, some of which included: working on cars, house fix-up, sports, television, laundry, visits with friends, church activities, drinking, fishing and hunting, travel, and shopping. With free time, nonetheless, came related problems. Many respondents told of loneliness for family in Mexico during leisure moments. According to aliens, another difficulty came from the greater possibility of arrest during non-working hours, for example from activities associated with bars, shopping, or driving on highways or in towns. With the exception of employment in potato warehouses or in adjacent alien housing, leisure periods brought Mexicans the highest number of arrests and deportation.

One episode depicting dangers for aliens during leisure time, for example, began when an alien, living with his citizen common-law wife and child on a very isolated ranch, drove his car for gas one late Friday afternoon. He was arrested by sheriff's deputies for making an illegal turn across the highway, was found to be without legal documents, and was given over to the INS for immediate return to Mexico. His family, unable to be reached by telephone and not knowing his whereabouts, located him shortly before his bus departure for El Paso a few days later.

Local Relationships: Perhaps the most complex relationship illegal aliens encounter in living and working in the United States derives from their ties with local Spanish-surnamed citizens or Chicanos. One simple explanation of this association cannot suffice, for survey data indicated ambiguous feelings by Mexican workers toward their former countrymen.[11] Aliens described Chicanos as being lazy and unwilling to do the work of labor Mexicans could do. Several blamed them for informing against Mexicans to government authorities to win in competition over women and jobs. Views of cheating, drunkenness, fighting, and ridicule from Spanish-surnamed local workers frequently were drawn by the Mexicans.

In a positive vein, Mexican laborers frequently regarded Chicanos as "brothers" and "good people," and mentioned friendships toward them as fellow workers and in social activities. Surveyed aliens disclosed particularly close ties between Mexican men and Chicano women; local common-law wives and girl friends received warm descriptions by them.

No complaints concerning local businessmen and government officials were expressed by those interviewed. Yet, two workers' common-law wives maintained some stores and business concerns, such as hotels, auto repair shops, some restaurants, and second-hand clothing outlets would over-charge or short-change their husbands because they were known-illegal Mexicans. The wives admitted that larger grocery, hardware, and clothing stores treated aliens kindly and honestly, however.

When asked their extent of assistance from government agencies, all Mexican workers argued they were not eligible for social services because of Mexican

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[11] This ambiguity toward Chicanos also can be seen in Mexico as well, where racial-cultural ties of affection balance antagonisms. For an analysis of this relationship, see the author's "The Chicano as a Participant in United States and Mexico Relations," paper presented at the Midwestern Association of Latin American Studies annual meeting, St. Louis, Missouri, October, 1977.

nationality. Several mentioned their common-law wives or girl friends received food stamps and other assistance, and all Mexicans were aware that such benefits were available to American citizens.

No complaints arose from illegal aliens concerning maltreatment of workers by police or Immigration officers. Within the context of being of illegal status in this country, two important matters commonly appeared from survey responses. Aliens reported mental and physical anguish in continually fearing apprehension and deportation. Threats to their employment and the economic survival of their Mexican families frequently passed in their minds - - fright in driving on highways or in towns, potential antagonisms with fellow workers and girlfriends who might turn them in after a quarrel, or inability to challenge bosses for forcing on them long work hours or other unreasonable labor responsibilities.

Evidence of local discrimination against Mexicans emerged from survey information, felt most strongly by the two women living with their Mexican husbands. Both women described family and friends' pressures to disassociate themselves from aliens because Mexicans were alleged by local citizens to be affected with a variety of negative aspects. Girls were not permitted to date alien men; illegals' children at times received unequal opportunities in public schools. While such feelings may not be open or widespread in southern Colorado, they were felt by the Mexicans surveyed and their wives, and were stated with some fervor.

Attitudes Concerning Mexico and the United States: When asked to depict major differences between the two countries, all workers emphasized the availability of jobs in the United States and disparaged poverty and lack of opportunity in Mexico. This response by far predominated among those surveyed and influenced

other descriptions of national variations. Mexicans were divided as to which country they would prefer residing in permanently if work opportunities became available in either.

Aliens respected the United States for having honest officials. A majority also praised North American agencies for assisting the poor through social assistance, although some admitted this country, in comparison to Mexico, possessed more ample resources with which to provide these services. A significant portion of interviewees showed more negative than positive impressions of Mexico. Their government, they felt, offered no welfare benefits to the poor, and officials were very corrupt and were disinterested in assisting poverty-stricken families. Recent presidents of the republic,[12] including Jose Lopez Portillo, and the official political party (the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, or PRI) came under widespread attack by aliens. With only one exception (in which PRI had given a small plot of land to a worker's father) all characterizations of the Party were negative, and often quite negative, despite the fact that none of the Mexicans could show close contact with political activities in Mexico. In contrast, several interviewees praised efforts by the National Action (PAN) and Popular Socialists (PPS) parties toward alleviating poverty in their home regions.

All respondents were familiar with oil discoveries in southern Mexico; yet, they felt oil wealth would not accrue to northern Mexican poor. Instead, only rich politicians and oil union members would receive benefits, the majority firmly argued. No connections were mentioned between Mexican oil surpluses, energy crises in the United States, and illegal migrant labor moving northward across the frontier.

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[12] Several warmly remembered the presidency of Adolfo Lopez Mateos (1958-1964) and his contributions to workers and to the poor.

Aliens' Views of the Future: A large portion of illegal workers predicted continued difficult times for Mexico, as no opportunities for work would probably surface there during the coming decade. Generally, to them much better conditions were in store for the United States, and in particular, Mexicans envisioned the San Luis Valley of Colorado as having the most prosperous future of all, despite the aliens deportation by the INS being imminent.

Far less certainty appeared when aliens place themselves within a future context. Many Mexicans emitted fears that available work for them might not continue in the United States, and that, forced to remain in Mexico, they would suffer by living without steady employment.

Summary and Conclusions: Outlined below in way of summation are the following highlights made earlier in this paper.

1) The typical San Luis Valley illegal alien was young, male, originated from rural regions of the Mexican state of Chihuahua, revealed low schooling levels, and reported farm worker or campesino background.

2) Most Mexicans worked in local agricultural jobs; very few aliens' complaints arose concerning unfair treatment by farmers or warehouse bosses.

3) Pay rates were low, usually set at minimum wages of $2.90 per hour in the warehouses, and were lower for workers on farms and ranches in more isolated areas. Few extra benefits supplemented these wages. Long working hours were common; significant dollar sums left southern Colorado for support of families in Mexico.

4) Trailers predominated as the most characteristic type of illegal's housing; rental rates for these dwellings resembled amounts usually paid by citizens. The majority of aliens' housing was very sub-standard.

5) Most leasure activities were comparable to those of local Coloradoans, with with the exceptions of related extreme loneliness and danger of arrest and deportation.

6) Mexicans' descriptions of Chicanos were ambiguous. They alleged some discrimination and dishonesty toward them came from businessmen but this maltreatment was not widespread and particularly did not occur in larger stores. Mexicans claimed they received no direct public services, although they were aware of these benefits.

7) Workers viewed the United States more favorably than Mexico, this comparison based upon employment opportunities for them in the former country and continuing poverty in the latter. The official party, PRI, received harsh criticism from workers surveyed; Mexicans felt newly discovered oil wealth would not benefit poor farm workers.

8) To aliens the future appeared brighter for the United States than for Mexico; less certainty was evident in their hopes for their own continued labor in this country.

Three concluding observations remain to be mentioned. First, the Mexicans who volunteered information upon which this paper is based were, in this author's view, hard-working, intelligent, resourceful, and sophisticated in ways of life and survival. Had their country given them opportunities of work and individual progress, they would be contributing these talents to their own regions, not to ours. This paper is dedicated to their example and their abilities.

Harmful misconceptions accompany illegal Mexican workers in the United States. For example, one of these misconceptions alleges that aliens take away many jobs that citizens could fill. From the author's research and the reports of local state employment officials this simply is not the case for rural agricultural employment. Another erroneous assertion claims illegals absorb high proportions of welfare services and public tax revenues. Or, most Mexicans desire living permanently in the United States, arguments which this paper's survey information from aliens themselves refutes. These misconceptions are damaging because they hinder possible remedies for legal Mexican Migrant utilization.

Finally, whereas there probably exists no complete solution to illegal Mexican labor in this country, in this author's opinion some reforms are feasible and could prove beneficial to all groups involved in agricultural employment realms. For example, farmers and food processers require skilled, dependable but periodic seasonal labor which does not command excessively high wages. Local citizens, in contrast, do and should oppose foreign workers taking jobs from them. Mexicans cannot locate work in their regions, must come north for economic survival, but would be more content with both protection from the disruptions of illegality and deportation and from unfairness in working conditions from farmers.

Might there be passed stronger federal legislation than presently is[13] available whereby farmers in need of agriculturally-skilled workers may contract with state employment agencies for temporary but legal Mexican labor? Qualified citizens would be given priority in hiring; when insufficient quantities of citizens come forth, however, petitions for Mexican job-seekers could be extended. In the latter case, legal Mexican migrants should receive standard minimum wages, over-time pay increments, necessary health insurance protections, and seniority privileges over other aliens. Expenses of aliens' housing and transportation should be covered by the workers themselves. Penalties would be enforced against farmers knowingly hiring illegal workers and border restrictions on surreptitious entry must be maintained.

Amiable relations between the United States and Mexico are essential to both countries in the years to come. Yet, illegal Mexican workers in this country pose a significant threat to continued harmony across the border. Solutions for the

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[13] See section 214(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (1952) for details on temporary nonimigrant worker permits. Although this law is utilized by sheepherders and other specializations in the United States, it has never seen extensive use in the San Luis Valley because farmers either are unaware of its existence or they refuse to pay the slightly higher salaries and the benefits stipulated in the Act.

alien labor dilemma are difficult to find, but immediate remedies are vital. The author believes the viewpoints expressed in this paper by illegal workers may assist, at least partially, in facilitating a more effective program for Mexican labor in the United States.

Estudio de actitudes de trabajadores agriculas migrantes

Investigación a cargo de: Prof. P. Kelly, Adams State College, Alamosa, Colorado

Questionario

1. ¿Cuantos años tiene?_____Sexo: Hombre_____mujer_____Tiene esposa(o)_____
   ¿Tiene hijos?_____Si su contestación es sí, indique las edades de sus hijos.
   _____¿Cuantos hijos lo acompanaron aqui?_____
   ¿Cuales son sus edades?_____Lo acompano aqui
   su esposa(o)_____.
2. ¿En que estado_____y ciudad_____vive usted?
   ¿Cuántos habitantes viven en su ciudad o puebla?_____ ¿Donde nacío Ud?
   _____.
3. ¿Hasta que año de escuela asistio usted? Primaria___Secundaria____Otra_____
4. ¿Que es (era) la ocupación de su padre?_____de su madre_____
5. ¿Que era la ocupación de Ud. en México?_____¿En que ocupación le gusta
   trabajar más?_____
6. ¿Por que llegó Ud. de México hasta los EEUU?_____
7. ¿Tiene Ud. parientes que trabajan en otras partes de los EEUU?_____
   ¿Dónde_____Tambien en el pasado trabajaban parientes en los EEUU?____
8. ¿Con que medio de transporte llegó a esta area?_____Fue el mismo medio de
   transporte que usó para llegar a la frontera?_____
9. ¿Dónde curzó la frontera?_____¿Cuándo cruzo la ultima vez?_____¿Fue esta
   su primer visita a los Estados Unidos?_____¿Cuántos veces antes vino
   Ud. a los Estados Unidos a trabajar?_____Dónde_____
10. ¿Lo ayudó algún contratista para liegar aquí?_____Se encontró con él
    contratista antes o después de curzar la frontera?_____¿Lo ayudó a
    usted antes este mismo contratista?_____o vino Ud. independientemente
    en sus otros viajes aquí.

11. ¿Contaba usted con alguna promesa de encontrar trabajo aquí?_____¿En caso afirmative, le hizo la promesa el contratista?_____La familia_____ _____amigos_____o empleador_____

12. ¿Qué es su trabajo actual?_____¿Está usted satisfecho con su trabajo actual?_____Si su repuesta es negative, explique por que_____ _____

13. ¿Ha tenido usted otros empleadores ademas del actual?_____Si su respuesta es afirmative explique por que trabaja para este ahora y lugar de volver con los otros_____

14. ¿Ha tenido usted malas experiencias con empleadores en Estados Unidos?_____ Si su respuesta es afirmativa, explique_____ _____Indique dos o mas cosas que se podrean hacer para mejorar las curcunstancias en su trabajo actual_____ _____

15. En el caso que usted trabaje aquí hasta el final de la cosecha, que medio de transporte usara para regresar a su caso en Mexico_____¿Regresara directamente or ira a otro trabajo?_____Si piensa emplearse en otro trabajo antes de volver a casa indique por favor en que tipo de trabajo y dónde_____ _____

16. Confia usted en que tendra empleo en el futuro en Estados Unidos: Mucho_____ algo_____poco_____

17. ¿Envia usted regularmente dinero a su casa?_____Si su respuesta es afirmativa, cuánto por mes: la mitad del sarario semanal;_____mas de la mitad_____o menos de la mitad_____¿De que modo envia a Mexico su dinero?_____ _____Tambien, es para su familia_____or para un banco en Mexico_____ Otro_____

18. ¿Qué articulo le gustaria comprar en Estados Unidos y llevar a su casa?_____

_____

19. ¿Cuántas horas cada semana trabaja usted aquí?_____¿Cuántos dolares gana usted cada hora or semana?_____¿Tiene otros tipos de beneficios de su empleador?_____¿Esta usted satisfecho con su salario?_____

20. ¿Que tipo de transportación usa usted en ir a su trabajo?_____¿Cuánto paga usted para su transportacion local?_____

21. ¿En que tipo de casa vive usted aquí?_____¿Vive en una puebla o con su empleador?_____¿Cuánto paga usted para su renta?_____ ¿Paga tambien por aqua y electricidad, etc?_____¿Si paga, cuánto dolares cada mes?_____

22. ¿Es su casa aquí mejor que su casa en Mexico?_____En que manera_____ _____En su opinion, como mejoraria su casa en los Estados Unidos_____

23. ¿Se enfermo alguna vez al comer o beber aqua en los Estados Unidos?_____ ¿Esta satisfecho con la comida que se consigue aquí?_____¿Que se podria hacer para mejorar la comida?_____

24. ¿Donde compara usted sus alimentos aquí?_____sus ropas y otras necesidades_____

25. ¿Que tipo de enfermidades ha usted tenido en los Estados Unidos?_____ ¿Que hace usted cuando esta enfermo?_____

26. ¿Ha usted recibido servicios del gobierno en los Estados Unidos?_____ Que tipos de servicios_____

27. ¿Atende Usted la inglesia aqui?_____frequente o poco_____

28. ¿Que hace usted en su tiempo libre?_____

29. ¿Hay una posibilidad que un Mexicano sea detenido por la imigración?_____ _____. Si es si pasa, bajo cuales circunstancias (o, en que circunstancias podria un trabajador ser arrestrado por imigración) _____ _____

30. ¿Le gusta la gente de los Estado Unidos?_____Por que?_____ _____

31. ¿Como se diferencia la gente de aquí con la gente de Mexico?_____ _____

32. ¿Que opina acerca de los Chicanos?_____

33. ¿Tiene usted alguna relacion con otros Méxicanos aquí?_____ y, en que manera se relacionan_____

34. ¿Cree usted que los trabajadores Méxicanos aquí estan mejor adaptados que los trabajadores Americanos aquí?_____ ¿Por que?_____

35. ¿Cree usted que le quita el trabajo a personas locales?_____¿Por que?_____ _____

36. ¿Le gusta vivir y trabajar en el Valle de San Luis más que en otros partes de los Estados Unidos?_____¿Por que?_____

37. ¿Cree usted que dentro de los proximos cinco anos su situacion general mejorara_____empeorara_____o sera aproximadamente igual_____? ¿Por que?_____¿Cree usted que su situacion actual es mejor que hace cinco anos_____peor que hace cinco anos _____o aproximadamente la misma_____?

38. ¿Que es el futuro de México, en su opinion?_____

39. ¿Cuáles son cosas le gusta más de México?_____ ¿Cuáles son cosas que le gusta menos de México?_____

40. ¿Cuáles son cosas que le gusta más de los Estados Unidos?_____ ¿Cuáles son cosas que le gusta menos?_____

41. ¿Prefiere usted vivir en los Estados Unidos o en México?_____¿Por que?_____

_____

42. ¿Le gusta el gobierno de los Estados Unidos?_____¿Por que?_____

_____

43. ¿Le gusta el gobierno de México?_____¿Por que?_____

44. ¿Como son diferencias entre los gobiernos de los dos paises?_____

_____

45. En su opinion, que es el futuro del agricultura del valle de San Luis_____

_____Que tipos de cambio occurira aquí_____

_____